

CMA's Certificate in Continuing Medical Education

RONALD L. KAYE, M.D., *Palo Alto*

THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION is formulating a program which will reinforce its commitment to high quality patient care through the physician's continuing medical education. The program will provide formal certification which will serve to acknowledge the accomplishments of California physicians who keep pace with advancing medical knowledge.

The proposed program will serve as a major step in implementation of Resolution 120-69, which was passed by the CMA House of Delegates in March, 1969. Full text of the Resolution is as follows:

Resolution 120-69—Continuing Medical Education

"WHEREAS, the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies have the responsibility to demonstrate to the citizens of California that California physicians possess the most modern medical knowledge; and

"WHEREAS, the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies have a primary responsibility to the citizens of California to assure that the medical care rendered to them is of the highest quality; and

"WHEREAS, the Second Planning and Goals Conference in Continuing Medical Education reaffirmed the long-established policy of the California Medical Association that continuing medical education is wholly desirable and becoming even more necessary to enable the physician to render the best possible medical care for his patients in this day of rapidly expanding knowledge; and

"WHEREAS, the Second Planning and Goals Conference in Continuing Medical Education has recommended that the California Medical Association make available to all physicians practicing in California the

administrative mechanisms to collect, codify and certify participation in accredited postgraduate instruction; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED: That this House of Delegates reaffirm the long-established policy of the California Medical Association that continuing medical education is wholly desirable and is becoming even more necessary to enable the physician to render the best possible medical care for his patients in this day of rapidly expanding medical knowledge; and be it further

"RESOLVED: That this House of Delegates direct the Council to develop, with the assistance of the Scientific Board, the specific administrative mechanisms to enable the California Medical Association to collect, codify, and certify participation in accredited postgraduate instruction; and be it further

"RESOLVED: That this House of Delegates instruct the Council to prepare these specific administrative mechanisms for presentation to the 1970 House of Delegates.

"RESOLVED: That the California Medical Association maintain a working relationship with the Board of Medical Examiners on all matters of continuing medical education."

It is in response to this Resolution that CMA is preparing to introduce its formal Certificate in Continuing Medical Education. The new program is now in the final phases of development and will be submitted for final approval to the House of Delegates in March, 1970.

In addition, the new program will reflect the medical profession's own response to increasing consumer concern with the quality of medical care. It will lodge within the medical profession, rather than in governmental agencies, the task of assessing the adequacy of the continuing medical education of California physicians. It is anticipated that such a program will offer a reasonable alternative to the pressure of current legislative proposals which are now pending concerning periodic re-licensing of physicians.

The author is the Chairman of the CMA Committee on Continuing Medical Education, and Director of Medical Education, Palo Alto Medical Clinic.

Submitted 18 December 1969.

Reprint requests to: Committee on Continuing Medical Education, California Medical Association, 693 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94102.

The proposed new Certification Program has as its goal neither arbitrary regulation nor restriction, but rather the responsible recognition and rewarding of those who maintain high standards in pursuit of self-education. The plan is being coordinated closely with a comparable one by the American Medical Association which recently initiated a Physician's Recognition Award in Continuing Medical Education. It is anticipated that reciprocity will be established between AMA and CMA with respect to these programs to avoid duplication.

The CMA Certification Program, as it will be initially implemented, will represent a flexible and open-minded approach, subject to constant modification. It will encompass continuing medical education of all types, both informal and formal, in which a California physician participates. These are expected to include meetings, programs, and courses sponsored by medical schools, medical institutions, and specialty societies; formally constituted grand rounds; teaching, publication, and research activities; journal clubs and individual reading of journals; audio visual programs, exhibits, and all other known teaching-learning experiences. As new modes of continuing medical education are developed, tested and approved, they, too, will be included in the Certification Program.

When the program has been fully worked out and approved, a booklet explaining it will be made available to all physicians in California. The booklet will also detail the ways in which CMA will help physicians maintain an on-going record of those educational activities which qualify him for certification.

A mechanism for the accreditation of actual con-

tinuing medical education activities is being developed by a separate committee of the CMA Scientific Board that is appointed specifically for this purpose. This Accreditation Committee is clearly differentiated from CMA's Committee on Continuing Medical Education, with the latter setting policy guides and the former charged with developing the actual mechanics of accreditation.

A second innovative program by CMA's Committee on Continuing Medical Education will catalyze the efforts of community hospitals to strengthen and improve their own staff educational activities. This program, like the Certification project, is a response to a recommendation of the 1969 Planning and Goals Conference. From that Conference emerged recommendations that the medical staff of every hospital establish an educational committee, that educational programs be developed in response to specific needs, as revealed by a systematic assessment of the quality of medical care within the hospital, that these educational efforts be properly evaluated as to effectiveness, and that CMA provide staff assistance and materials to facilitate carrying out these recommendations.

Accordingly, a CMA Continuing Medical Education Subcommittee on Evaluation is preparing materials on methods and techniques of evaluation which are relevant to this charge. They will be made available to hospitals seeking help in upgrading their staff educational activities. Through the activities of this subcommittee, a constant interchange of information will be carried out concerning new developments in the field of continuing medical education which are applicable in a hospital setting.

Attention, Pathologists

Mario Werner, M.D., Clinical Pathologist at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, will speak at the Pathology Section meeting of the Annual Scientific Assembly, March 7. Mark your calendar.